



Neighborhood Planning Assembly Draft Minutes

NPA:
(choose one)

Wards 1 & 8	Wards 2 & 3	Wards 4 & 7	Ward 5	Ward 6
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Date of Assembly : 6 / 6 / 2019 Start Time: (Commence): _____

Location: Greek Orthodox Church Finish Time: (Adjourn): _____

Note taker: Please forward these official minutes to: _____

Steering Committee Members in Attendance:

Matt Grady, Gail Rafferty, Mary Riley, Michelle Mraz, Joel Fitzgerald

Discussion Topics

- *These can be copied from agenda items*
- *Content of discussion not required*

Actions Taken / Decisions Made

- *Immediately following Agenda Item*
- *Generally includes: electing a new steering committee member, voting as a body to send a formal communication to the City, decisions to spend money.*

Agenda Items and Actions:

Please Remember to Enter Adjournment Time!

Public Comment:

Comment: Emer Feeney from the Fletcher Free Library is replacing Mary Danko this evening.

Comment: Martha Lang from Ward 1 commented that a Ward 6 City Councilor is proposing building housing at UVM which backs up to 6 properties she owns in Ward 1.

Moderator: Since UVM and Ward 6 city council are represented here, do they want to reply? Karen Paul commented the there was an incomplete draft mistakenly posted on the city's website. The Neighborhood Action Plan steps call for UVM to house more of its students. The council approved 11-1 to modernize the Trinity Campus because it is underdeveloped. UVM has been discussing this for years and doing a great job involving neighbors. Lisa Kingsbury (UVM) replied that it has been challenging to find appropriate places to put additional beds. Approximately 35% are on the Redstone Campus and 9% are on Trinity. The housing master Plan would be for upperclassmen. They will engage the Ward 1 neighborhood, Ward 1 City Councilors, and Martha.

Comment: Charles Simpson proposing an advisory memorandum: given that Brookfield Asset Management is renegotiating the terms of City Place, we (the residents of Burlington) should urge Karen and the other City Councilors to renegotiate our city's stake so that the city owns 10% of City Place.

Fletcher Free Library:

Emer Feeney: She works at the Library front desk, and is becoming the Assistant Director. Strategic Plan

Status: It started 5 years ago, and we are 3 years into the rollout. They wanted to check in with the community

to see how things are progressing. There is a link to the survey on their website, as well as from the NPA agenda that was posted for this meeting. Additionally, there are physical surveys available.

Comment: The library is great.

Comment: The library is wonderful.

Question: Does the library have a relationship with Burlington Telecom? Answer: Yes, they have one with Comcast and one with Burlington Telecom. They have 2 streaming services: Kanopy and hoopla.

Question: Is there anything they think they have missed or the they really need to know but don't? Answer: They are trying to address diversity.

Question: Any plans for the computer section? Answer: There are lots of users, no real changes planned. There is good internet throughout the building.

Question: Location? Answer: No plans to move. They need to update the building over the long term.

Question: Other libraries have quiet sections... Answer: Hope to have one in the future.

Comment: Barbara's programming is great.

Comment: Support for local authors is great. Halifax library has a barrister patio on the roof.

Question: Summer Programs? Answer: "The Summer Reading Program" is now called the "Summer Challenge." They have added new elements like a scavenger hunt, a reading challenge for adults, teens, free lunch sites 3 times/week, Very Merry Theater performances, and computer classes. They will also be offering summer camp collaborations to fill the gap in between when camps end and school starts.

Burlington Schools Update:

Bonnie Johnson-Aten, District Principal

Bonnie's position supports all of the principals in the district. She has been in this position since January of 2017. Prior to this position, she was the Edmunds Middle School Principal. Her position of supporting principals is very helpful to all, especially the Elementary Schools. The construction at Edmunds is halfway complete. There will be a new reception area, both offices will be on Main Street side. The horseshoe entrance will still exist. Construction should be done by August. The High School prospect is expected to break ground by May of 2020. There is lots of input from the faculty, administration, community, and students. They are in the process of deciding on a construction manager. Updates are posted once a month on the BSD website.

Questions can also be asked on the website. Administrative changes: There are 3 new principals to the district schools: Champlain Elementary School, IAA, and SA. Joe Restigini from North Hero. Kevin Robinson From Bristol will be the new IAA principal. Bobby Riley will be going to Horizons on Top. S.A.'s new principal will be Nina Aproposa. She comes right out of Harvard. Additionally, The vice-principal of EMS will be living, leaving a vacancy to be filled. Noel Green will be the interim principal for 2 years to allow a proper hiring process for a permanent principal position.

EMS protests: A teacher at Edmunds received communication the day before about the proposed student protest: met with the students to discuss their issues, demands. Students of color feel staff doesn't understand their issues and don't ask the right questions. One of the teachers protested too. It was important for the administration to hear. The protest was impressive and very well lead. The day after at Edmunds there was an assembly with conversation and discussion, which sparked conversations district wide. How can the district do better? Add these issues to the curriculum.

Question/Comment: There have been several incidents on the district buses. The most recent incident where students were unruly led to students being kicked off of the bus. This is against policy. Where is the communication by the school? Comment: Bus drivers have not picking up some students waiting at bus stops after this incident. Answer: This is a city and school problem and a tricky area. The buses are not Burlington School District buses, but the district pays CCTA to transport students. There are no easy answers. There is a shortage of drivers. Every few years a big incident occurs. The situation is a constant struggle to figure out.

Comment: The bus situation is unsafe. Answer: Possibly the school district stops providing transportation.

Comment: BHS was originally built on conservation land.

Comment: The land was farmland.

Question: Preschool Status? Answer: Status quo for now; they are still looking at the issue but don't have an answer.

City Place Update:

Will Voegele, Brookfield Asset Management, Sr. VP for Development

Chelsea Ziegelbaum, development manager

Will: Thanks for coming. His experience is 30 years of mixed use development experience. Brookfield is here because they bought the original Developer, Devonwood, so it makes sense for Brookfield to be over as managing member of the partnership; this partnership with Don Sinex still remains. Brookfield can bring the Brookfield expertise to the project. There is a 5-6 month focus: Financing; they have a term sheet with the bank of the Ozarks. They have worked to take drawings out to bid and are evaluating the bids right now. They are making sure the nuances are right for the project. They have stepped back from making a start date commitment, They want to build trust, be clear what they are working through. They don't want to make conjecture and have to back track. They want to speak with one voice. Will is the project lead and emphasized that he is going to see the project through. He realizes it is important to listen to the community, has learned through years of experience, and will do his best to be a good community partner.

Chelsea: They are committed to making the project a success.

Question: Are they changing the design?

A: The goal is to bid the original project design the went out for bid. If there are challenges, they may have to reconsider.

Q: Will they meet the deadlines for Champlain College and UVM Medical Center?

A: They are working towards updating those deadlines.

Comment by Champlain College Rep: Champlain College won't have student apartments there.

Q: Who owns the project?

A: There are 2 partners: Devonwood and Brookfield. Brookfield is the managing member: they manage the partnership as well as the properties.

Q: Why is there still a huge hole in the ground?

A: The development has been full of road blocks; what happened has not been lost on him. The financing has been approached in a different way. They have a large financial stake and want to go forward.

Q: What are you going to do?

A: They have 100% focus on this project, and have to get it started.

Q: This plot has been a sore spot in the city for 70 years. It was an Italian neighborhood which was torn down; there is lots of history here.

Q: How open are you? How committed is your process?

A: They just finished a huge project in Arlington, VA. They listened to and embraced community input.

Q: Did the parking plans change because of contaminated soil?

A: They are doing Environmental works. Bids have come in high, so costs will be higher.

Q: What happened with Don (Sinex)?

A: We are still Don's partner but we are in front now. Don was acquired by Brookfield.

Q: Charles Simpson asked the audience a follow-up to his earlier comment. Given that the City Place terms have been renegotiated, do we feel that City Council should ask for 10% ownership because we have 10% investment in the project? A: A minimal amount of audience members raised their hands in support.

Q: Do we have all the money required for the project?

A: Chelsea answered that we have all the money absolutely. Will answered that we have a term sheet with the bank, and have the ability to fund the project.

Q: There was initially lots of excitement for this project but when the design started changing, people started not supporting the project. Which design are you supporting?

A: The project that was permitted and approved is the one we are going to build. We can make sure those specific plans are available.

Q: Why the vagueness? In the interest of transparency, what happened? We are paying a big cost because someone didn't get their ducks in a row. What is the way forward?

A: This is not a normal way: Brookfield wasn't comfortable because certain things were not yet in place. They wanted to step back and get things lined up. The goal is to go forward.

Q: The City Councilors got hoodwinked.

A: The focus now is to go forward.

Question by Michelle Mraz: Can you come back in September?

Answer: Yes.

Legislative Update:

Mary Sullivan-moved from the Natural Resources Committee to Transportation. At the end of the session, there were things left on the table; they will return in January.

Joey Donovan-Ways and Means-they try to lower peoples taxes in a thoughtful way. Most bills go through. They are adores sing funding for Lake Champlain.

Barbara Rachelson -House Judiciary Committee. An extensive portfolio of bills were introduced; some passed, some didn't. She introduced some bills-the Towing Bill of Rights; facial recognition, which is technology which helps law enforcement.

Mary is celebrating the ban on single-use plastics bill. Lots of groups are interested in this one; it went to the Governor's office today.

On then Governor's desk is the bill for 24 hour waiting period for gun purchases. This important bill could save lives-the waiting period is currently longer to adopt an animal from the Humane Society! The father of a boy who recently committed suicide gave moving testimony.

There is a bill to raise the smoking age to 21.

Senatorial District Changes-no Senate district can have more than 3 legislators -this will affect Burlington. Joey is concerned about the voice of Burlington.

Barbara: The education bill passed. The Ethnic Studies bill will incorporate Ethnic Studies into the school curriculum by 2021. The goal is to build a culture of equity through knowledge.

Mary: The no-toxic toys bill was vetoed. The reason was that it would have a negative impact on manufacturers.

Barb: The Safety Bill deals with medical monitoring. We don't want businesses dumping chemicals which will get into the water supply. We want Vermont to be a standout in safety; want the pipes tested in school.

Legislation now to test lead in schools, which includes daycare centers.

There is a Juul Corporation game plan now: want to regulate this chemical delivery system. Their advertising has been restricted, and the age to purchase has been raised.

Q: F35 status?

Joey: In support of having them in our area, otherwise 100 jobs would be lost. She recognizes this in an imperfect situation but supports having the jobs.

Comment: The noise will be super loud for Winooski residents; it will be negative for them.

Barbara: It is hard to know how much legislation introduce to make an impact on this.

Q: The Air Force said there will be learning impairment for children in the noise zone, and this increases as the noise level increases. Having the F35 here would violate their own rules. Senator Leahy is putting pressure to have them here. The jobs issue seems inconsequential compared to the negative health effects.

Barbara: Getting good information on this issue is very important.

Joey: Will have a thorough study of this, which will inform all of us to make good decisions.

Q: The reps to Washington (Sanders, Leahy, and Welsh) have been favoring this.

Barb: Maybe someone from one of their offices can come.

Comment: Why would we want it to be known that we have nuclear capabilities with them?

Q: A new York Times article highlighted the unintended consequences of banning plastics. What would work better is charging for bags to fund environmental causes.

Comments: some grocery stores aren't taking returnee bottles anymore.